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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies and discusses major issues and trends in special education in the United States, including implications of these trends for future developments. Trends are discussed for the following areas: (1) philosophy and law (a communitarian philosophy is emerging); (2) labels and terminology (a trend toward declassification); (3) assessment and evaluation (there will be an increase in ecological assessments); (4) early childhood and postsecondary education (special education will be viewed as lifespan schooling); (5) transitions and life skills (these will receive greater emphasis); (6) inclusion and integration (issues will remain unresolved in the near future); (7) consultation and collaboration (more emphasis, but problems remain); (8) cultural diversity; and (9) gifted and talented (mor emphasis on multiple facets). There is also likely to be more effort to coordinate various agency services to bring about improved affordability of assistive technology devices to deal with continuing problems of teacher shortages and teacher training, recognizing the need for both specialist and generalist training; and to undertake more school effectiveness research. Specific conclusions and predictions center on the pendulum swing between service provision in integrated or segregated settings. (Contains 45 references.) (DB)

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Special Education Issues, Trends, and Future Predictions

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Special Education Issues, Trends and, Future Predictions

Many educators have referred to the "cycles" of change in education. These cycles are based on the view that all educational perspectives have their time when they are innovative, then they become the status quo, and finally obsolete as the next group of methods, beliefs, and educational philosophies takes hold. Special education has been compared to a pendulum, (Hewett & Forness, 1977) where the beliefs and perspective swing from the right to the left and back again. There is evidence that these historical models may have value and help educators to make future predictions based upon the trends of the past. These models demonstrate that change is rarely linear and that modifications and adaptations do not necessarily go in the same direction as the immediate past. The special education pendulum is a reminder that the tide will flow in the opposite direction after it has taken a complete swing. The difficulty of future predictions is not predicting whether things will change (they will), but rather when these changes may occur, and what will result from these changes.

Special education is a broader topic than those discussed in other chapters of this book. There are as many issues and trends in special education as there are in regular education. In fact, there is a growing belief that special education is becoming less and less a separate field of interest. Special education has always been concerned with students' individual needs. This philosophy is slowly becoming similar to the goals of general educators. With the practices of integration and inclusion, the line

between special education and regular education is becoming increasingly blurry.

Some of the major issues and future trends in special education involve early childhood intervention and family involvement as well as education of the gifted and talented. Fortunately, these topics have been covered in some depth in two other chapters in this book. Also, cultural diversity is covered in the bilingual education chapter. Although these important topics will be mentioned in terms of special education, please refer to the other chapters for more information. Other topics of importance according to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (Davila, 1990) include transitional issues, vocational education, improving assessment, and inter- and intra- agency collaboration. For these and other major topics, a brief background of the issues involved, the current trends, and predicted future developments will be discussed.

Philosophy and Law

Special education has gone through several changes despite being a relatively new field of study. Special education first received federal regulation and assistance with the passing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (aka PL. 94-142). This law required free appropriate education for all handicapped students and called for the placement of students in the " least restrictive environment ". These provisions were the result of growing awareness and advocacy of civil rights and the philosophy of "Normalization". Civil rights convinced legislators that children with handicaps should be provided the same educational opportunities as their able peers ("Separate is not equal" since

Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954). The normalization philosophy assumes that disabled persons want to live as "normally" as possible and the schools should assist in this endeavor by integrating students with disabilities with their nonhandicapped peers. It was believed that integration would alleviate prejudice, discrimination, and assist the socialization skills of all involved.

Other laws also had impact on the current status of exceptional individuals. (ie: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act). These laws all serve to increase the rights of individuals with disabilities and to provide or withhold funds from agencies that do or do not comply with the regulations (Wegner, 1988). The trend has been to give additional support to persons with disabilities just as other laws have protected the rights of other minority groups.

Recently, the Education For All Handicapped Children Act has been updated and renamed "IDEA" Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The changes in this law have occurred in response to some of the newer special education trends. The effects of current philosophies and laws will be discussed in later sections.

As for future philosophies about how society views people with disabilities, Turnbull and Rutherford (1991) predicted that the communitarian perspective will hold favor. A review of past philosophies demonstrates that the perspective on individuals with disabilities "has moved from a person-possessed, to a person as mechanism, to a person of the whole." (Turnbull & Rutherford, 1991). Just as the interventions have gone from hopelessness to intervening or rehabilitating the individual, the focus has moved toward modifying the environment as well as the

individual. The authors propose that in the future, society will think about persons with disabilities in a communitarian way, which concentrates on the "interdependence of people and their duties for the common good." Although they support their view well, this is not the philosophy currently being promoted in society, and the idealized future they portray may never be fully realized.

Labels and Terminology

The ambiguous nature of some of the handicapping categories has lead to mislabeling of students. Although the medical field has adequate measures for blindness or deafness, the educational measures for learning disabilities and behavioral disorders are imperfect. Also, special education methods of instruction do not always differ according to disability, but rather are based on individual needs.

The pressure to label students comes from a variety of sources. The most pressing source has been for funding. School districts will not receive funds from the state or federal governments unless the child qualifies in an established special education category. Some states, such as California, have gone to "non-categorical categories" so that students only have a designation of being mildly handicapped or severely handicapped. Special education requires the use of labels for many reasons besides funding. These include communication among educators, classification for research, identification of students, appropriate placement, and intervention or treatment decisions. The trend is swinging toward declassification of students with disabilities, but if it becomes difficult to communicate in the field, then the trend will reverse.

A recurring issue in special education has to do with the terminology utilized. One interesting phenomenon is the desire to change the terminology in order to represent the current philosophies and overcome the natural stigmas that become associated with disabilities and labeling. Some examples of terms that have changed can be found in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 around here

Although most educators, parents, and students would agree that the newer terms "sound better", the stigma of the older terms will become attached to these new labels in a matter of time. Unless society changes its view that disabilities are undesirable characteristics, these stigmas will exist despite changing to more politically correct terminology.

Ironically, during this time of getting rid of labels, some new categories of disabilities have fought to become recognized. Recent categories that have been added to the IDEA law were Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism, and Severe Head Trauma. Although some of these categories may be considered "low incidence", proponents of adding these classifications believe these disabilities have been overlooked in special education research, assessment, and interventions. It is hoped that by adding these categories more attention will be directed to the needs of these students and these families.

Assessment and Evaluation

Special Education has long been accused of overusing assessments. This comes from the primarily behavioral approach that is still used to some extent in most special education classes. This continuous monitoring of student progress has its advantages and disadvantages. Though it is often time consuming, it can give the teacher immediate feedback on whether a new intervention is working or not. The biggest drawbacks to these assessments is that they measure overt behavior but cannot easily measure a person's internal cognitions, or emotions. For example, one can measure how many words a child reads incorrectly but do not always know why he or she made the mistake, or if the child enjoys reading. The trend in assessment is steering away from using only standardized tests and incorporating more curriculum based assessments and outcome based evaluations (Davila, 1990). One popular method of collecting and evaluating curriculum based student work is the use of portfolio assessments which is an analysis of collected student work. Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) has also become a widely advocated method of assessment which has the good qualities of curriculum based assessment, but also has some standardization in its procedures. There are several articles in recent journals that debate and outline the CBM method (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1991).

One growing awareness in special education is that disabilities may sometimes be the result of environmental or ecological interactions with the individual, rather than solely inherent in the person with disabilities. This has become readily apparent in the field of behavior disorders and emotional disturbances, since a student may only have problems in specific

environments and not in others. This interactionist view has lead to the development of ecological assessments which focus dually on the individual and his or her setting. Also, treatments and interventions are now taking the student's environment into account.

Early Childhood and Post Secondary

The current emphasis in legislation has been toward expanding special education from birth to adulthood. This newer perspective is based on a view of lifespan schooling. Despite the limitations of the previous laws for students with disabilities, it quickly became obvious that students with problems were not born at the age of 5 and cured by the age of 21. So, newer amendments (PL99-457) have expanded PL94-142 to include ages before and after "childhood". (Smith, 1988; Mack, 1988)

Early childhood is a quickly expanding focus in special education. Research has supported the belief that early interventions are critical for significant improvements in exceptional individuals. There have been new laws, funding, and training established in the field to assist in supporting early childhood special education. Unfortunately, there is still a much higher demand for these services than what is currently being provided (Palsha & Rennells,1990). A complete chapter on early childhood special education has been included in this book. New policies and legislation seek to further involve families, especially at the preschool levels, but also at the transition period in late adolescence as individuals with disabilities enter the workforce.

For a long time, it was believed that persons with disabilities were unable to work or support themselves. When evidence to the contrary

helped influence society's perceptions, (plus a few strong laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace), special education started to expand into the vocational training arena. Originally, all training was done by occupational therapists who worked with groups of disabled adults in sheltered workshops and day treatment facilities. When segregation was no longer coveted, then other options were explored. The first was with work crews, the second was supported employment with job coaches, and the newest being supported employment using natural supports. Although these methods have shown success with individuals with disabilities, there are not enough programs or services to meet the current demands (Edgar, 1988).

Vocational education has declined in the 1980's and evidence demonstrates that this has hurt special education students (Decoteau, 1989). The prognosis for students with disabilities in post secondary education is still quite poor, only one fourth of students with disabilities participate, compared to their non-disabled peers (Fairweather & Shaver, 1990). Some problems identified in secondary and post-secondary programs include identification conflicts, tracking, underpreparedness, high dropout rates, administrative problems, service delivery concerns, and training/research needs (McGuire, 1989).

Transitions and Life Skills

Transitions has become a growing concern of special education. The results of research on vocational and postsecondary outcomes spurred special educators to develop programs to help students with disabilities make the transition from school to work and independent living. Although

much research is being conducted in this area, there is a great shortage of information on what methods are the most effective (Rojewski & Meers, 1991). Some handbooks have been developed so that teachers, parents, and students have some practical suggestions for what to do during transitional times. Many of the suggestions are vocationally oriented, but the others mainly focus on independent living skills (Cahill, 1988).

Most individuals learn a majority of their life skills from their families or peer groups. For individuals with special needs, these skills often become a priority for their education. Individuals who have sensory or physical disorders such as visual impairment, hearing loss, cerebral palsy, or spina bifida, need to learn how to use the specialized materials and equipment that will assist them. It takes training to learn how to read Braille, how to communicate with American Sign Language, how to utilize a communication board, or how to check if one's "shunt " is draining cerebral fluid properly. Any of these life skills may be essential, but are specialized by the individual's particular needs. These skills are not taught in the general education environment, but are still located in segregated schools or hospitals that concentrate on the particular disorder.

Functional academics are usually taught at the regular school site, but often in full-day special education classes or resource rooms. The focus of functional academics is on the essential skills required for life, rather than those that may be required for college. For example, rather than Algebra or Geometry, a math disabled student may learn how to balance a checkbook or estimate the price of an item on sale. For a student with moderate delays, it may be more functional for them to learn how to read signs, labels, and menus rather that a second grade level story. Students

with severe delays are taught to hold themselves erect, and hopefully how to walk, talk, and feed themselves. It is considered more "functional" to be able to go to the bathroom oneself, than to know how to multiply in one's head. (Even "able bodied" people use calculators!)

Inclusion and Integration

The Education for all Handicapped Children Act and the newer IDEA law both advocate "the least restrictive environment". Prior to the Regular Education Initiative (Will, 1987), the least restrictive environment meant that the student would be placed in the most appropriate placement for learning, while maximizing the student's time when they are placed with nonhandicapped peers. This perspective lead to an insurgence of resource programs where individual needs students were "pulled-out" to the resource rooms for the subjects where they needed the most assistance. For the rest of the day, the student was "mainstreamed" into regular classrooms. Since the Regular Education Initiative, the least restrictive environment is becoming interpreted more often as the regular classroom setting. For added assistance, the student should receive services in the regular classroom, by the regular teacher, by an instructional paraprofessional, or by the special education teacher who comes into the regular classroom.

This shift in perspective has followed the special education pendulum theory well. Students went from not being taught, to going to separate schools to separate classes, and now being totally integrated. Short of getting rid of special education altogether, the trend cannot swing any more in this direction. Although it will take several more years for

integration to become wide spread, the trend is definitely in the innovative stage moving toward more global adoption.

Unfortunately, despite some of the advantages of this integration trend in possibly improving in social skills,in providing less feelings of alienation, in less stigma, and in lower costs, there are several disadvantages that are not being overcome in the school setting. Some of the concerns noted by researchers are the lack of special education training for regular teachers and little support or time in the general education system for teachers to make the modifications for exceptional students. Education is continually taking responsibility for increasingly more social responsibilities, and it is unlikely the current general education system will magically be able to serve the same students who were having trouble there in the first place (Keogh, 1988). Also, some students have benefitted greatly from pull-out settings.

Once the unresolved problems with integration become more widespread, it is likely that the pendulum will start to fall back toward the center and allow pull-out programs to be an option again. Regardless of the debate in special education over which is better, one overriding theme in special education has been to have as many options available as possible since individual students learn best in different ways. There have been few special educators that believe there is any one right way of teaching that works with all students. Most teachers strive to be eclectic in their methods of instruction. (If one method was a "sure thing" then special educators could all happily go out of business.) Hopefully, the field will not limit itself to only a few service delivery options.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC, 1993) has recently issued a policy statement on inclusive schools and community settings. Although CEC members believe that individuals with disabilities should be "served whenever possible in general education classrooms" they also advocate maintaining a variety of intervention options. The policy includes several recommendations for changes in the schools, in communities, and in professional development if inclusive schools are to be successful.

Although the trends for the severely handicapped have been similar to the mildly handicapped, this is where some educators want to draw the line for inclusion. Many educators feel that individuals who are severely or profoundly handicapped should not be in a regular classroom and cannot learn without small group instruction from highly trained specialists. Other educators strongly reject the idea of drawing any "cut off" line for services. (Blaine, 1988). The issues surrounding integration and inclusion have been greatly debated and will continue to be unresolved in the near future.

Consultation and Collaboration

For students that are involved with integrated programs, it is essential to implement a consultation or collaborative model of service delivery. Consultant models (Pine,1991) were originally thought to be "expert models" where special education specialists would work with general educators and instruct them on how the teachers were to meet the needs of their exceptional students. This model was not appropriate in some states, where the special education teachers receive no significant additional training compared to their regular education counterparts. This model also had difficulties when experienced teachers did not want or

appreciate advice about their own classrooms. Current models of consultation are more reciprocal and give the specialist either equal, or less authority than the regular education teacher. (Pugach & Johnson, 1993)

The collaboration model (Simpson & Myles, 1993) is a more popular method being advocated by several researchers and practitioners. Collaboration models (like consultation models) assume that the regular teacher is the primary provider of instruction and has the ultimate responsibility. The special education teacher's role is to act as a support and a resource to the regular teacher including working in the general classroom with students. The General Education Collaboration Model proposed by Simpson and Myles (1993) is composed of five essential components: 1) Flexible departmentalization, 2) Program ownership, 3) Identification and development of supportive attitudes, 4) Student assessment as a measure of program effectiveness, and 5) Classroom modifications that support mainstreaming. (p. 65)

Although collaboration models may sound ideal, there are several problems that have not yet been resolved. One problem is communication, for teachers do not always possess the skills to problem solve or work well together. Another concern is the lack of time to work with other professionals. There is also sometimes little common ground between regular and special education, with educators holding many misconceptions of the other field. Teacher education is behind in training special educators and especially regular educators to deal with these changes. The field is also at a loss as to how to adequately train teachers working in the schools. Although inservices are the current method of training working educators,

there needs to be additional support, school adaptations, and classroom modifications for collaboration to be successful.

The future of special education seems to be swinging toward increased collaboration. It appears that special education will be able to adapt to these changes, but it remains to be seen if the general education programs will be as receptive.

Cultural Diversity

In many regions in the United States and around the world, increasing cultural diversity is affecting all of education including special education. Over identification, poor assessments, biased assessment, individual needs, English as a Second Language, Limited English Proficiency, bilingual programs and transition programs (Ortiz & Ramirez, 1988). Teachers will need to be trained to work with diverse cultures (Ramirez, 1990) and efforts are being made to recruit minority teachers (Franklin and James, 1990). The field of bilingual special eduction is a growing one and in the future, this collaboration is likely to expand to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. There is another chapter in this book that discusses the concerns of bilingual education in more depth.

Gifted and Talented

The Gifted and Talented do not receive any attention through federal funding, but many states have established funding for programs. Both inclusion and pull-out programs are implemented. Although programs for the gifted are expanding, there are persistent problems with uses of poor definitions and inaccurate eligibility criteria. Giftedness is now being

perceived as multifaceted and pertaining to a variety of skills including intelligence, creativity, leadership, artistic, and psychomoter abilities. These newer definitions will lead to improved assessments and better identification of gifted individuals. (Sisk, 1990).

There are other current concerns in the study of gifted and talented students. The major problem is with lack of funds devoted to gifted education and research. Other concerns include groups that have been traditionally underidentified such as underachieving children, culturally diverse students, and gifted females (Stephens, 1992).

Since instruction for the gifted does not significantly differ from the education provided to non-gifted individuals at the present time, the debate over who qualifies for services might be irrelevant. Research and practice do advocate several methods for educating the gifted including acceleration, enrichment, mentoring, and specialized or individualized programs (North Carolina, 1988). Lack of training, funding, and awareness are why these methods are not universally integrated into the schools. Gifted education is predicted to be an expanding field for the future (Fisher, 1989). A chapter about gifted and talented is also included in this book.

Interagency Communication

Individual needs persons have been the beneficiaries of a myriad of services from different fields. These services are all trying to assist people with disabilities, but from different points of view. An exaggeration of this problem can be illustrated in the following manner. Consider a hypothetical 12 year old male student who has difficulty staying on task,

cannot stay in his seat, has problems reading, and rarely does his homework. If his mother brought him to a medical doctor, he may receive a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder/ Hyperactivity and be put on Ritalin. If his teacher refers him to Special Education, he may receive a diagnosis of learning disabled and be sent to a resource room. If a speech therapist works with him, he may be diagnosed as being language delayed and require speech therapy. If a psychologist interviews him, his delays may be due to emotional problems and he is recommended for counseling. If the student gets in trouble with the law, then the juvenile justice system may assign him a parole officer who works with him as a juvenile delinquent. If his family has a social worker, then he may be perceived as a disadvantaged child requiring social benefits. This example could go on and on, but the main point is that this is the same exact child with the same exact symptoms. What intervention is provided often depends on who saw him first.

In the real world, there are students who get involved with several agencies. But rather than working together, these agencies often start from scratch with each new client and do not try and consolidate their assessments or interventions with other agencies. This does not only waste time, but opposing interventions may cancel each other out thus proving ineffective to the client. More often, they serve to confuse the beneficiary rather than helping to explain about the problem.

International communication about special education concerns has been increasing as well as joint research collaborations. There are a number of international conferences, publications and organizations in the field of special education (Juul, 1989). Just as it is essential for different agencies

to collaborate, the sharing of knowledge is important for worldwide advances in special education.

Assistive Technology

Technology has not solved all the problems of education or replaced teachers as the medium for instruction. However, some technological breakthroughs have helped to improve the quality of life and learning for many persons with disabilities. There have been assistive technology advances with communication computers, voice activated computers, robotics, automated wheelchairs, personal readers, augmented environments, as well as those that will have an impact on able bodied persons such as CD-ROM, virtual reality, video disks, and interactive programs (Georgia, 1991). Innovative programs are being designed for reading, writing, mathematics, problem solving, music, art, social studies, science instruction in addition to special education (Okolo, 1990; Bright & Grigassy, 1989). Telecommunications will also impact the lives of individuals with disabilities by allowing them access to information, communication and access to other people all over the world (Georgia, 1991).

The recent major change is not the invention of these items, (most have been in existence for over a decade) but the new affordability of this technology is now making its use practical. The future of special education may be greatly influenced by these and future advancements. As the technology becomes more and more affordable, the advantages will be easily accessible to students with disabilities.

Teacher Shortages and Teacher Training

Just as the numbers of future individual needs students is expected to rise, the supply of trained personnel to work with them continues to lag. Part of the problem is the large number of teachers that will be retiring this decade. The other is the occurrence of low retention and burn-out. Special Education is an increasingly difficult field and the average special education teacher stays in the classroom for less than five years. This is lower than the retention rate of regular education teachers. (McBride, 1988)

One solution that many districts have capitalized upon is the hiring of paraprofessionals to take up the slack. This has been employed especially in areas with a substantial amount of cultural diversity. Although there has been some debate over the adequacy of the paraprofessionals, in most cases this alternative has been a welcomed support to regular and special education teachers. The call for improved training of paraprofessionals is being encouraged in the field.

Another shortage of personnel is occuring in the area of special education leadership. Smith and others (1988) have made what they believe is a conservative estimate of special education faculty shortages increasing by 10 per cent a year.

There is also increasingly a shortage of well trained educational researchers in the field of special education, and not enough doctoral candidates to replace them. (Smith et al., 1988).

For the future, Smith (1990) predicts that special education faculty will need to be generalist in their field as well as specialists in at least one area.

The types of specializations she predicts will be required are in the following areas:

1) Special educators will need expertise in adapting environments to the requirements of individuals with disabilities.

2) Special education leadership will be necessary in distance education and other remote-site delivery systems such as computer technology, audio conferencing, instructional television, video taping and other techniques.

3) An understanding of other instructional technological applications such as interactive videos, video-disks, computer programs, and multi-media presentations will be required by special educators.

4) They will also need to be skilled at adaptive technology for designing and producing assistive or augmentative devices such as voice controlled computers and robotic arms.

5) Special educators will require expertise in the area of multicultural special education since the pool of culturally diverse students is expanding and special education assessments and instructional methods are primarily based upon the needs of the majority culture.

6) Excellence in teacher education will continue to be a significant part of special education. These educators should have practical experience as well as be able to translate and apply research into practical settings. Other areas of specialization should include administration, school counseling, school psychology or regular education.

7) There is a shortage of special education researchers who can prepare future researchers in the field. Future researchers will be trained in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Applied behavioral analysis will also increase as a research methodology.

8) The expansion of special education into the life-span of the exceptional individual from early childhood to transitional services will demand expertise in these areas. Both areas will increasingly involve the exceptional individual's family and the other support services and agencies that also work with the concerns of early childhood and transitional populations.

9) Life-span development will also require increased skills in collaboration and coordination of the diverse delivery systems available to special education students. They will require minor areas in different fields such as sociology, nursing, political science, or rehabilitation.

Although few would disagree that these specialties are needed, it is unlikely enough personnel will meet these requirements in the near future. Universities are attempting to adapt their programs according to the needs of special education, but changes in academia can be extremely slow.

Research

According to Ysseldyke (1989), the current amount of research in education is inadequate, much of the research being conducted is of poor quality, and little of the research is linked to innovations in practice. He states that the characteristics of research in the immediate future are likely to be 1) collaborative, 2) interdisciplinary, 3) naturalistic, 4) intervention-focused, 5) conducted in centers and research organizations, 6) of limited short - term usefulness to school personnel. In the future, special education must improve training of researchers, increase the

number of trained researchers, integrate the findings and translate the research to practice (Ysseldyke, 1989).

The areas of investigation will also change with the times. Ysseldyke (1989) predicts that the major topics of research for the future will include continuing school effectiveness research and analysis of reports critical of schools (which often expect schools to eradicate all of society's ills). Other research interests will focus on ways the special education field is changing such as the concept of special education needs, rights of individuals with disabilities, patterns of employment, incidences of handicapping conditions, and revisions in ways research is evaluated. Ysseldyke (1989) also predicts increased research in the areas of increasing poverty and cultural diversity.

Technological advances in information processing will have a positive impact by simplifying future research searches and assisting in improving research. A factor negatively affecting future research is the inadequate funding and support of educational research as compared to other fields of research (Ysseldyke, 1989).

Conclusions and Predictions

There are several other issues mentioned when reviewing special education literature that cannot be discussed in the confines of one chapter. Some of these other issues are special education accountability, funding concerns, students from impoverished families, foster children with disabilities, special education students involved with the juvenile justice system, rural special education, distance education for students with disabilities, special education curriculum, and specific instruction in

special education (California,1988; Iowa, 1988; McBride, 1988; O' Connel, 1989; Ohio, 1990; Rural Special Education Conference, 1988).

In an analysis of the history of disability services, Murray (1988) gives a concise overview of the rising and falling of the "age of optimism" during the mid 19th century. This age of optimism was comprised of beliefs that education and training could have significant impact on persons with disabilities. Murray (1988) begins his discussion by reviewing Itard's work with the "Wild Boy of Averyon" which is often regarded as the beginning of special education (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1981). This is the first documented case of the use of treatment to change "mental defectiveness". Prior to this time, the popular view was that the amount of intelligence and abilities a person possesses is a fixed amount that they were born with or inherited (Pinel, 1806). Itard had high expectations of what he could accomplish with treating a boy who had almost no contact with humans. Although Itard did not "cure" the boy after 5 years of work, he was able to show some improvements in the areas of language and social abilities. Afterwards, the boy was placed in custodial care where he died a few years later.

This optimistic view countered the nativistic belief that intelligence was an unchangeable characteristic. Itard assumed that the fault did not lay in the boy, Victor, but rather in the inadequacy of his interventions and treatments. The new age of optimism that exists today is still founded on the idea that special education can improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. The reason for low success overall is blamed on inadequate funds, poorly trained personnel, or lack of technological advances.

Murray (1988) stated the following:

> The parallel with today is obvious . . . The attitude that all or most of the problems that are encountered can be solved with an adequately devised training program is very much in evidence. The realization that while we may spend hours training two or three people, there are ten others sitting in the back wards picking their hands with frustration, has not yet dawned on us. If this interpretation of what has happened is correct, the way of the future could already be spelled out for us. Like Itard, many people in the field will eventually abandon it because they cannot see the results they want to see. Like the optimists of the mid nineteenth century, many people will continue to show some results with small groups of people. They will continue to create expectations that are seen to be impossible to fulfill when the full scope of the need is observed in realistic terms. The people who will suffer, of course, are the still large numbers in our institutions, especially those classified as having severe or profound disabilities. (p.101).

In the recent decades, the pendulum has been swinging toward more integration of exceptional students in general education, increased services for persons with disabilities, and a popular support for individual rights. Although I believe this trend will continue for another decade or two, I do hope we can learn from the history of special education. When people involved in special education become discouraged with the results, the pendulum seems to swing back toward a more nativist and segregationist view. Hopefully, we will have the foresight to prevent this inevitable back swing from distroying the gains made from our current trends. Just as a pendulum spends more time in the middle than at either end, moderate views should survive in the long run.

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Table 1. Special Education Labels and Terms

Innovative	Status Quo	Obsolete
Exceptional	Special	Abnormal
Students with Disabilities	Disabled Students	Disabled
Specific Learning Disabilities	Learning Disabilities	Minimal Brain Dysfunction
Developmentally Delayed	Mental Retardation	Feebleminded or Mentally Defective
Low Average	Borderline	Dull
Educable	Mild	Moron
Trainable	Moderate	Imbecile
Severe/Profound	Custodial	Idiot
Behavior Disorders	Emotionally Disturbed	Crazy or Insane
Physically Challenged	Physically Handicapped	Disfigured or Deformed
Disabled	Handicapped	Defective
Attention Deficit Disorder	Hyperactivity	Incorrigible
Pervasive Developmental Disorder	Autism	Possessed by Demons
Inclusion/ Integration	Mainstreaming Pull-out	Institutionalized or Home-bound
Collaboration	Consultation	Isolation
Special Education is a service	Special Education is a place	No Special Education